

Smoke Signals Radio Archive Episode 1997-02-07
Segment 4
Episode Air Date: 1997-02-07

Mary Lou Smoke shares a traditional teaching from Chief Seattle of the Squamish Nation. After, Dan and Mary Lou celebrate the 1997 winners of the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. Dan Smoke also introduces the feature for this episode, a recording of Patricia Montour speaking at the Conference on the Report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

Host(s): Dan Smoke, Mary Lou Smoke
Guest(s): Jessica Smith

DAN SMOKE: Aanii! Shekoli! Okay. That was **Litefoot**, who goes by...well, I guess he goes by Litefoot. He's an Oklahoma **Cherokee**. He has red vinyl records down in Oklahoma, and he has two CDs out now. The second one, which is the one we featured today, is **Good Day to Die**, it's his most recent. Hopefully we can track down his first CD and play that for you at some point in the future.

Okay, right now we're going to...we want to take some time to hear a traditional teaching. This is not really a traditional teaching. It's more of a response from one of our ceremonial leaders by the name of **Chief Seattle** of the **Squamish Nation**. Chief Seattle is speaking to one of the presidents of the United States back in the late end of the 19th century, and he's responding to the fact that the president is taking all his territory of his people where they have existed since the beginning of time. And this is his response to that, and this is how he describes the land, the territory, the surrounding creation, and how we are related to all of this. And this is his way of saying that.

MARY LOU SMOKE: Every part of this Earth is sacred. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing, and every humming insect is holy. We are part of the Earth, and it is part of us. The perfume flowers are our sisters. The deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and man all belong to the same family. You must teach your children that the rivers are our brothers, and you must give the rivers the kindness you would give any brother. The white man is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he wants. The Earth is not his brother, but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on. He kidnaps the Earth from his children, and he does not care. He treats his mother the Earth and his brother the sky as things to be bought, plundered, sold like sheep or bright beads. His appetite will devour the heart and leave behind only a desert. There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No place to hear the unfurling of leaves in the spring or the rustle of an insect's wings. The air is precious for all things share the same breath. The beast, the tree, the man. They all share the same breath. What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, man would die from a great loneliness of spirit, for whatever happens to the beasts soon happens to man. All things are connected. Teach your children that the Earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the Earth befalls the sons of the Earth. This we know. The Earth does not belong to man. Man belongs to Earth. This we know. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself. [to be transcribed].

DS: And [to be transcribed] is in the **Sioux** language, meaning *all my relations*. And, oh, I guess Mary Lou took some artistic licence and instead of saying 'all my relations,' she said "[to be transcribed]," which is the Sioux way of acknowledging all our relatives. So now we want to...you probably read about the Aboriginal Achievement Award winners that recently were

announced in the London Free Press. The actual awards night was, I believe, last couple nights ago? Maybe it was Thursday? And it is going to be rebroadcast on February the 13th, I believe. And, oh no, I'm sorry. It's going to be on Wednesday, February the 12th at 8:00. Tom Jackson is going to be the host, and it's going to be run on CBC. Okay. So, we're going to just read to you the press release that came from the **Canadian Native Arts Foundation**, by Jessica.

JESSICA SMITH: Thank you, Dan. The Canadian Native Arts Foundation has announced the fourteen winners of the 1997 **National Aboriginal Achievement Awards**. The National Aboriginal Achievement Awards have quickly become an empowering and positive symbol for all of Canada's Aboriginal peoples. **Mohawk** composer/conductor John Kim Bell, founder and chair of the NAAA, and the Canadian Native Arts Foundation said in making the announcement, "They have helped build a bridge of understanding between Aboriginal Peoples and other Canadians by showcasing the best of who we are in the Aboriginal world." They were established by John Kim Bell to pay tribute to the United Nations **International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples** in 1993 and are a special project of the Canadian Native Arts Foundation, a nationally registered charity that has provided approximately \$5 million in scholarships to Aboriginal students. Recently, the CNAF was selected to manage the Aboriginal Veteran's Scholarship Trust, a \$1.15 million trust that will assist Aboriginal students in business and science academic programs. The first NAAA were presented in Ottawa in 1994, Vancouver in 1995, and in Winnipeg last year.

This year's recipients will receive their NAAA at a gala award ceremony to take place in Calgary, February 7th at the Jubilee Auditorium, with an audience that will include His Excellency Romeo Leblanc, Governor General of Canada, Alberta Premier Ralph Klein, CIBC Chairman and CEO Al Flood, CNAF patrons and benefactors, and Canada's Aboriginal leaders. The show will be televised nationally on CBC February 13th. The 14 Aboriginal Achievers for 1997 are **Cape Dorset Inuit** artist, **Kiugak Ashoona**; northern Quebec's rising political and social advocate, George Berthe, the Special Youth award recipient; Alberta-based film and television director and producer, Gil Cardinal; Alberta-based justice reform worker, Chester Cunningham; northern Quebec **Cree** business leader, **Chief Billy Diamond**; historian and writer, Dr. Olive Dickason, this year's Lifetime Achievement recipient; Toronto-based *Dances with Wolves* Academy Award-nominated actor, Graham Greene; Nova Scotia's award-winning poet, Rita Joe; Northwest Territory cabinet minister, Stephen Kakfwi; Ontario Court of Justice General Division Judge, Harry S. LaForme.

DS: Miigwetch, nya:weh, Mary Lou and Jessica. I think the only person that we really knew in there was we've seen Billy Diamond. Dr. Olive Dickason was at the conference at McGill University this past weekend that we attended. And we have seen Graham Greene, but we've never met them. So, we've never really met a lot of these people. We have been following the work of Gil Cardinal, who is a writer, director, producer of Aboriginal films and television. Harry S. LaForme, he's a personal friend. I worked with him at the Department of Indian Affairs back in the early 70s. He is now a...works for the Attorney General of Ontario as a General Division judge up in the Collingwood area, in and around there. He's originally from the **New Credit First Nations at Six Nations**. So, I guess we know Harry. Rita Joe, she's been a recent visitor to this territory. She was down in Brantford at the Woodland Cultural Centre. She's a poet, a writer, and she writes about the healing movements that are taking place.

DS: Now we're about ready now for our feature for this afternoon. As I said earlier, it's the conference on the Report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. It was organized by the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada, McGill University. Desmond Morton, I think he was one of the main players as far as organizing and bringing all these people together. [Inaudible].

Policy, in all its dimensions. It deserves intensive discussion and debate. This major conference will provide a forum for that debate. And as I was saying before, at the opening of the show, Patricia Monture, she is a Mohawk from Six Nations. She was brought up in and around London, and she worked at the **N'Amerind Friendship Centre** as a summer student while she attended university here at Western. She graduated with her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, went to Queen's University and graduated with a law degree from there, went to teach out at Dalhousie University, University of Ottawa, and then she's now no longer teaching law, but she is teaching Native Studies at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. This is **Patricia Monture-Okanee**, now living in Saskatoon and **Thunderchild First Nations** community, speaking at the conference on the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.